

Thanks to the **California Native Plant Society** ([www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)) for making this information available.

For more information on California Native plants, visit the CNPS website.

**Other sources include:**

•Las Pilitas Nursery website  
[www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com)

•Native Sons Nursery  
[www.nativeson.com](http://www.nativeson.com)

**For inspiration and ideas visit:**

•Leaning Pine Arboretum  
Cal Poly San Luis Obispo  
[www.leaningpinearboretum.calpoly.edu/](http://www.leaningpinearboretum.calpoly.edu/)

•San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden  
Hwy. 1 (in El Chorro Regional Park)  
[www.slobg.org/Index.htm](http://www.slobg.org/Index.htm)

•Nipomo Native Garden  
Intersection of Camino Caballo & Osage  
(off of Pomeroy)  
[www.nipomonativegarden.org](http://www.nipomonativegarden.org)



**Nipomo Community Services District**

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Nipomo, CA 93444  
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[www.ncsd.ca.gov](http://www.ncsd.ca.gov)

## Did you know?

Plants are essential to the water cycle. Over 90% of water taken in by roots is released to the atmosphere.

Plants native to soils and climate of a specific area provide the best overall food sources for wildlife, and support 10 to 50 times as many species of native wildlife as do non-native plants.



*Salvia spathacea* (Hummingbird Sage) and hummingbird  
Photo courtesy of Las Pilitas Nursery ([www.laspilitas.com](http://www.laspilitas.com))

It would cost \$6.8 billion to construct a water treatment plant for New York City to replace wild-land water purification services.



## Why use California native plants?

Areas with natural native vegetation provide water purification, air cleansing, waste treatment, carbon storage, and wildlife habitat...and many California native plants are drought tolerant!





- ▶ Water is a precious resource in California. Using drought-tolerant native plants for landscaping simply makes sense. These plants have evolved to naturally live in our climates. We can weave sustainable habitat into our urban areas.
- ▶ It simply makes sense to use plants which have naturally adapted to local climate, water availability, soils, and wildlife. For gardening and landscape use, they generally prefer little to no fertilizer, less water, and less effort in controlling pests than non-native plants.
- ▶ Native plants can often support 10 to 50 times as many species of native wildlife as non-native plants.
- ▶ Native plants are a vital component of California's scenic landscapes, including our world renown National Parks.
- ▶ California is a biodiversity hotspot recognized by international conservation organizations. The range of physical geography starting with coastline and going to the tallest peaks to the lowest elevation (below sea level) in the continental United States leads to a great diversity of climates and species.

- ▶ The United States hosts 15,890 vascular plant species. Nearly a third of those plants are found in California (5,047).
- ▶ California supports the greatest number of endemic (found nowhere else) plants of any state in the USA. (2,153 species, subspecies, and varieties)
- ▶ One third of plants in California are identified as rare, endangered, or threatened. (The special statuses are given to 2,089 species/sub-species/varieties out of a total 6,272 species/sub-species/varieties.) The status may be applied because their habitats are naturally rare due to climate or geography, but many have become rare because of pollution, development, over-collecting, and invasion by exotic species.
- ▶ In California, native plants refer to plants that were growing here before European human contact and settlement. Non-native species are those that have been introduced by people and are "alien" to our native ecosystems.
- ▶ California has the tallest, largest, and oldest trees in the world. The Giant Sequoia (*Sequoiadendron giganteum*): The General Sherman Tree in Kings Canyon National Park of California is 275' tall, with branches extending 55' from the trunk. Its trunk is over 32' in diameter at its base. It is estimated to weigh over 2,000 tons. The Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*): The "Stratosphere Giant Tree" in Humboldt Redwoods State Park of California is over 370' tall! The Bristlecone Pine (*Pinus longaeva*): "Methuselah" is 4,789 years old and grows in the White Mountains of California. This tree was living when pyramids in Egypt were being built.

- ▶ The Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata*) is the most widely planted and grown native California tree worldwide - as a timber tree.
- ▶ The original American peoples used over 2,000 native plants for medicinal purposes.
- ▶ California native sages are great for cooking! Try using the leaves of the purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) for a robust flavor in stews, rice, potatoes, stuffing, and especially cornbread! Hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*) has a gentler, citrus flavor, and works well in many dishes, including cream-cheese spreads.
- ▶ *Carex praegracilis*, a native sedge, can be used in place of traditional lawn grasses. It fills in very densely and, once established, it has hardly any weeds, it is more resistant to gophers than traditional lawn grasses, and it requires very little water. If you like, you can let it go without water during the summer. It will turn brown and go dormant, but when the winter rains come, it will turn green again and start growing. If you choose to mow it, two to three times a year is usually plenty. But if you don't mind the more natural, you can let it grow to its natural 6" to 8". Cutting it once a year keeps it looking fresh and lively.

